

I am a professor of journalism at Eastern Washington University in Spokane, WA. I want to register my adamant opposition to the idea of changing media ownership rules so that they allow newspaper publishers to own television stations. Other federal agencies intervene to prevent monopoly and there is nothing wrong with federal intervention to prevent the monopolization of our public conversation. This is not a theoretical matter. Please take a moment to look what has happened in Spokane, where the publisher of the local newspaper also owns one of the four television stations in the area. The idea that diversification of media has made such rules false. What happens is that the available financial proceeds of various media pour into the hands of one entity, and that entity ends up with the ability to hire an huge portion of the local reporting staff. This is the way it has developed in Spokane. The publishers of the Spokesman-Review also own KHQ Television and the Journal of Business. Local radio and television stations tend to follow the lead of the newspaper and the largest TV station.